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Summary record of the 1643rd meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Wednesday, 31 October 2018, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Sixth periodic report of Tajikistan (CEDAW/C/TJK/6; CEDAW/C/TJK/Q/6 and CEDAW/C/TJK/Q/6/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Tajikistan took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan), introducing the sixth periodic report of Tajikistan (CEDAW/C/TJK/6), said that the policies adopted by his Government in implementation of the Committee's previous recommendations included a national strategy on promoting the role of women for the period up to 2020, amendments to the Land Code to ensure that men and women had equal access to land, and the introduction of a quota for the enrolment of girls from rural areas in higher education.

3. In order to ensure that the importance of the Committee's recommendations was properly understood, more than 300 outreach events had been conducted for staff of ministries, departments and local authorities; lawyers and the judiciary; and members of civil society. Vocational training curricula also covered gender-related themes such as discrimination against women.

4. The definition of discrimination given in article 1 of the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities in the Exercise of Such Rights was identical to the one set forth in article 1 of the Convention. Moreover, the Criminal Code established liability for both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of gender. Separate legislation to deal with all forms of discrimination was currently being prepared and would cover direct and indirect discrimination in more detail.

5. The capacity of the Committee on Women and the Family, which implemented policies to promote women's role in public and political life and to protect the family, had been strengthened. Staffing had been increased by 112 posts and the 2018 budget was 35 per cent higher than the 2013 budget. An expert body had been set up by that Committee to carry out gender analysis of draft legislation and had examined more than 20 items. The Committee itself had prepared and submitted draft policies to the Government, including the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence 2014–2023, the State programme for the education, selection and placement of talented women and girls in leadership positions 2017–2022 and the national plan of action on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013).

6. Temporary special measures were systematically adopted in order to speed up the transition to de facto gender equality. One such measure was the educational quota for rural girls, which had enabled over 600 girls to enrol in higher education in 2018. Another was a system of extra points for women applicants taking part in the competitive examinations for civil service posts. In addition, the State awarded between 40 and 80 grants annually to encourage women entrepreneurs; the total amount awarded over the years was equivalent to around $2 million.

7. There were no specific strategies on the elimination of stereotyping, but relevant measures were included in policy documents such as the conceptual framework for family development, the national strategy on promoting the role of women and the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence. The Government had reached out to local communities, women, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and spiritual leaders to spread the message that domestic violence was unacceptable and to emphasize that parents had a responsibility to remove obstacles to girls' education and to prevent early marriage; failure to ensure that girls attended school was a criminal offence. Information was systematically disseminated through the media on issues of gender equality, women's and children's rights and the registration of marriage.

8. Stricter measures had been taken to prevent violence against women, including the criminalization of all forms of violence against women, including violence between spouses. Under new provisions of the Code of Administrative Offences that had been

introduced to reinforce the law on the prevention of domestic violence, police were authorized to apply individual preventive measures where necessary. His Government maintained regular statistics on violence against women, which were made widely available. In addition to the statistics to be found in the State party's report, he wished to inform the Committee that since 2014 the Ministry of Internal Affairs had brought 927 cases and drawn up 2,681 protocols in respect of administrative offences, while the courts had dealt with 660 criminal cases related to violence or discrimination against women.

9. Sexual harassment in public places was covered by the Code of Administrative Offences unless extortion, violence or sexual coercion was involved, which would entail criminal liability. A nationwide survey, aimed at obtaining representative data on the subject for the whole country, was currently being conducted by the Statistics Agency with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

10. Measures to combat human trafficking included ensuring that the country's population was employed, notably under the State programme to promote employment 2016–2017, which in 2017 alone had helped over 24,000 women to find work. Pimping was a criminal offence, but prostitution and the purchase of sexual services were administrative offences. An article had been added to the Criminal Code to penalize the production or sale of pornographic material containing images of children.

11. Since 2014, 129 cases related to human trafficking, involving 201 individuals, had been brought before the courts, and the corresponding legal decisions had been taken. An agreement on cooperation to combat human trafficking had been concluded with the other States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

12. Free legal aid was available to victims. Women victims of trafficking were entitled, if they so chose, to attend vocational training courses financed by the State. In the case of child victims, education was required to be provided and assistance with further studies was also available.

13. In order to boost women's participation in public and political life, the plan of action to implement the national strategy on promoting the role of women had set the goal of equal gender representation in the executive and legislative branches of government. That would be achieved through measures such as the State programme for the education, selection and placement of talented women and girls in leadership positions and the special provision for women applicants for civil service positions. At the Sarvar training centre for women, for example, 378 girls had completed leadership courses over the last five years.

14. The civil service issued quarterly statistics showing the progress made in women's representation in the various sectors of State activity. Among numerous other advances made, he pointed out that the head of the executive office of the President was a woman, as were the heads of the Committee on Women and the Family, the Committee on Language and Terminology and the Statistics Agency.

15. As to girls' and women's access to education, he said that the number of girls who elected to continue their education beyond the compulsory nine years of schooling had risen consistently, as mentioned in the State party's report. Of particular note was the increase in the number of girls studying mathematics, science and technology.

16. Efforts were being made to expand women's employment and close the pay gap between women and men. One way to support women was to grant them microcredit to encourage entrepreneurship: in 2016, over 150,000 women had received such loans. In addition, agricultural loans helped prevent discrimination against women in rural areas: although the overall percentage of agricultural workers who were women was on the decline, having fallen from 50 per cent in 2012 to 40 per cent currently, the number of women running smallholder farms had increased fivefold since 2012, with over 30,000 of the country's 170,000 smallholdings now run by women.

Articles 1 to 6

17. **Ms. Manalo**, noting that all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against women, were prohibited under the Constitution and laws of Tajikistan, said that she would like to know whether the Government planned to introduce a definition of direct and indirect discrimination against women into national legislation. She wondered what measures the Government had in place to prevent and eliminate indirect discrimination against women.

18. She asked what mechanisms were used to regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of gender equality legislation and programmes. Could the delegation provide some examples of the findings of such evaluations? In addition, she would like to know which items of legislation had been analysed by the expert body set up by the Committee on Women and the Family to conduct gender analyses of draft legislation.

19. She would like to know how many cases had been brought between 2014 and 2017 under article 143 (1) of the Criminal Code, which criminalized the violation of citizens' legal rights, including on grounds of gender.

20. **Ms. Ameline**, commending the State party on the creation of its digital platform on the country's international human rights obligations, said that she would like to know what measures would be taken to ensure that the Committee's concluding observations were given full visibility and made available, in particular, to civil society. The Committee was keen to see real and effective participation by civil society and women's rights NGOs in the implementation of the Convention. It was concerned, however, that the regulations governing NGO activities might restrict their ability to express themselves in that regard. She would appreciate the delegation's assurance that the State party was willing to consider the views of civil society, particularly organizations working in the area of women's rights.

21. She wondered whether the mandate of the Ombudsman and the Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law was to be strengthened, particularly in respect of women's rights.

22. The Committee was concerned about the independence of the judiciary and particularly about the law on the rights and duties of lawyers, which appeared to curtail the right to a defence. She would welcome assurances that the State party could guarantee that justice professionals would receive adequate training in order to ensure the effective application of the Convention.

23. Given the vital importance of social inclusiveness for the promotion of women's rights, she would like to know whether the new law on discrimination would take due account of the rights of ethnic, cultural, sexual and religious minorities.

24. **Ms. Kosimzoda** (Tajikistan) said that a working group had been set up to improve the legal framework for the elimination of gender stereotyping and the prevention of domestic violence. The working group consisted of three subgroups. The first subgroup looked at ways of combating gender stereotyping; the second, which reported to the Ministry of Justice, dealt with the protection of women's rights; and the third, which reported to the Office of the Prosecutor-General, focused on the prevention of domestic violence. Those groups had examined more than 50 items of legislation with a view to eliminating gender stereotypes, upholding women's rights and preventing domestic violence. In addition, the Committee on Women and the Family worked closely with 23 NGOs on the implementation of the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence.

25. In 2013, Tajikistan had been elected to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women for the 2014–2018 period. Since 2014, the Government had instigated a wide range of measures to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination. For example, it had drawn up national action plans to implement the recommendations issued by the Committee in 2014, launched a plan to implement Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000) and 2122 (2013) on women and peace and security, and ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The year 2015 had been designated the "Year of the Family" in Tajikistan. Further government strategies had been adopted to expand the role of women in Tajikistan and to

promote women's entrepreneurial activities, including the allocation of grants for that purpose.

26. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the country's development strategy provided for the monitoring and assessment of progress towards gender equality on the basis of quantitative and qualitative indicators, which had been devised in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, with funding from Switzerland. A biennial statistical compendium containing data disaggregated by gender was produced by the Statistics Agency with the support of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); the next edition would be issued in December 2018. Future editions would be expanded to incorporate data on the Sustainable Development Goals, and a new programme for 2018–2023 to improve gender-based statistics had also been established. Gender-disaggregated data on agricultural smallholdings were posted regularly on the Statistics Agency website in three languages. Public health data were also available on the website. A population profile containing gender-disaggregated data was published annually, and was now also disaggregated by age and locality. A report published annually on the website contained gender-disaggregated information on the progress made in eight different areas, including the number of women in political and public life, the number of women who received grants and the number of women heads of agricultural smallholdings.

27. Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals, which the Government was incorporating into all its policies, Tajikistan had made the elimination of social inequalities a national priority for the period up to 2030, and its efforts in that regard were further supported by a medium-term programme up to 2020. The Government sought to promote inclusive development and eliminate gender inequality through policies to ensure equal opportunities and prevent violence against women.

28. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that no criminal charges concerning violations of the right to equality had been filed during the reporting period.

29. **Ms. Manalo** asked why the policies adopted by the State party to eliminate gender inequality and discrimination had proved difficult to implement effectively. Which obstacles remained insurmountable and which had been overcome?

30. **Ms. Ameline**, noting that in March 2018 the State party had renewed its commitment to its partnership and cooperation agreement with the European Union, asked whether the new European Union strategy for Central Asia, with its focus on human rights and civil society participation, could be used to accelerate the State party's adoption of a comprehensive law on discrimination. She would like to know what measures the Government would take to combat impunity in cases of violence against women and to ensure that victims, especially those who lived in rural areas or belonged to vulnerable groups, were aware of the relevant laws and had access to justice.

31. **Mr. Sattorzoda** (Tajikistan) said that in 2014, 23 persons had been charged with violence against women; in 2015, 15 persons had been charged, 14 for violence against women and 1 for violence against a child; in 2016, 67 persons had been charged, 62 for violence against women and 5 for violence against children; and in 2017, 88 persons had been charged, 69 for violence against women and 19 for violence against children. The figures showed that the judiciary was fully independent of the executive branch, in accordance with article 9 of the Constitution.

32. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan), responding to the question on protection of the rights of minorities, said that the 2010 census indicated that Tajikistan was a multi-ethnic and multilingual country. Eighty-four per cent of the population consisted of Tajiks, 49 per cent of whom were women. As at 1 April 2017, the total number of civil servants stood at over 18,000 persons, of whom 92 per cent were Tajiks, 0.1 per cent were Russians, 6.6 per cent were Uzbeks, 0.8 per cent were Kyrgyz and 0.1 per cent were of other ethnic backgrounds. Members of minority ethnic groups were also serving as members of parliament. The figures showed that discrimination on the grounds of ethnic origin, age or gender was not an issue. The next census was scheduled for 2020.

33. **Ms. Song** asked whether the expert body on gender analysis established within the Committee on Women and the Family in 2015 was responsible for gender analysis of national policies and programmes to ensure that gender issues were fully reflected and women's needs accommodated. If that was not the case, which institution was responsible for that action? She would like to know if there was an institution at the provincial level to undertake gender analysis of local laws, policies and programmes. Noting the increase in the human and financial resources allocated to the Committee on Women and the Family, she asked whether all staff concerned had been given training on gender equality and on the Convention and whether the effect of the budget increase on the overall situation of women in Tajikistan had been evaluated. She would also like to know if there was a programme in place to ensure gender sensitivity among all civil servants.

34. The strategy of the Ombudsman's Office for 2016–2020 established gender equality as a priority area. She would welcome the State party's comments on information received from alternative sources indicating that the Ombudsman was not planning to carry out any activities on gender equality. She asked whether the Ombudsman was mandated to receive complaints of discrimination against women and, if so, how many such complaints had been received so far, and how they had been resolved.

35. **Ms. Nadaraia** said that temporary special measures were not being used to protect women's rights in the agricultural sector or the legislative sector, or to protect the rights of vulnerable women, to promote employment of women in the civil service or to involve women in decision-making. She would like to know what steps the Government was taking to strengthen the application of temporary special measures in those fields; whether the Government planned to provide better opportunities for women to become elected representatives; whether the concept of temporary special measures was provided for under national law; and whether the mechanisms for applying temporary special measures were defined in the country's strategic development planning documents.

36. **Ms. Kosimzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the Act on State Guarantees of Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Opportunities in the Exercise of Such Rights included a definition of discrimination. Under the national strategy on promoting the role of women, the Government was working with representatives of civil society to attract more women to the civil service.

37. Under the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence in Tajikistan, 33 crisis centres and 3 shelters had been established in various hospitals and clinics in regions and towns around the country. There were also clinics that offered counselling and medical assistance. In collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Government had organized training courses on domestic violence that had consisted originally of 20 hours of training but had been extended in 2016 by a further 16 hours. On completion of that training, participants could take a second course, run by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on the prevention of human trafficking. A further project with OSCE was intended to promote gender sensitivity in the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence and the protection of victims, with the creation of 14 posts of inspector, to be filled by women. Lastly, in 1997 the Government had established a system of quotas to promote the enrolment of girls from rural areas in higher education, and it allotted 2 million somoni per year to fund grants to women entrepreneurs.

38. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that the Committee on Women and the Family played a role in developing legislation. In addition to its review of 20 draft bills during the reporting period, the Committee had monitored the implementation of laws. It had also played a role in the Government's decision to award grants to support women's entrepreneurship. In the 2017–2018 period, the Committee had discussed the implementation of State programmes and strategies, including the strategy on promoting the role of women and the State programme for the prevention of domestic violence for the period 2011–2023.

39. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the Government had adopted temporary special measures to eliminate discrimination against rural women, with a view to ensuring that they had equal access to health care and to agricultural loans. The agricultural reform programme promoted equal opportunities for men and women in the agricultural sector. In

2018, of the 164,000 smallholdings registered by the Government, 31,000 were headed by women, which represented an increase of more than 500 per cent since 2012. Under the national strategies in place, particular priority was given to reducing social inequality through mechanisms to promote the involvement of women, especially rural women, in public life. Measures had been adopted to encourage women to study engineering, mathematics and the sciences, and to raise their awareness of the laws on discrimination.

40. **Mr. Alizoda** (Tajikistan) said that the 2016–2020 strategy being carried out by the Office of the Ombudsman gave priority to gender issues, including the prevention of domestic violence. All information on the activities of the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Children's Rights Ombudsman was posted on the Office's website. All activities were monitored and reported, and the reports were posted on the website. Fifty-two per cent of the complaints received by the Ombudsman were lodged by women. Three complaints of domestic violence had been received in the first nine months of 2018. The complaints had been monitored and appropriate decisions had been taken. The Ombudsman was developing a national strategy for the protection of human rights, with gender issues as a priority. The strategy was being developed with the participation of NGOs, and should be completed by the end of 2018.

41. **Ms. Song** asked whether the Committee on Women and the Family, in monitoring the implementation of laws, had identified any major gaps in the legislation and, if so, what follow-up measures had been adopted to address those gaps.

42. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that draft legislation was submitted to the Committee for review, and was then returned to the Government, which took the Committee's comments and suggestions into account.

43. **Ms. Gabr** said that stereotypes and practices harmful to women were widespread, in spite of the plethora of programmes and initiatives introduced by the Government. She wondered whether the national development strategy for the period up to 2030 included specific actions to tackle such stereotypes and practices or whether the State party intended to develop more focused strategies in that area. If so, she would like information on their goals, time frame and budget and on the role of the Committee on Women and the Family. She asked what campaigns to raise awareness of gender stereotypes would be launched in the media and in partnership with government agencies and religious leaders, particularly in rural areas.

44. The problem of domestic violence persisted in spite of the law on prevention of violence enacted in 2013. Part of the reason was that violence was socially accepted; she highlighted the fact that, according to alternative sources, 97 per cent of men and 72 per cent of women in the country believed that violence should be tolerated in order to keep families together. Awareness-raising measures and education were therefore essential as a means of changing attitudes. In that connection, she wondered what training was offered to those responsible for enforcing the law, including prosecutors, police officers and judges. She would appreciate information on the compensation awarded to women victims of violence and on the legal assistance provided to them. She would also welcome additional details on shelters for women victims of violence. Lastly, she would like to hear more about the removal of gender stereotypes from school textbooks.

45. **Ms. Jahan** said that trafficking in women and girls continued to pose a major challenge despite measures such as the Trafficking in Persons and Victim Assistance Act of 2014. She would be grateful for information on existing anti-trafficking legislation, policies and programmes. She wished to know, in particular, whether they incorporated a gender perspective and took into account the needs of actual and potential trafficking victims. The anti-trafficking law of 2014 was not being effectively enforced, as the required complementary legislation on support for victims had not been adopted; she would welcome an explanation as to why that was the case and what arrangements, including shelters, were currently in place to assist trafficking victims.

46. She would be interested in learning what efforts had been made to bring anti-trafficking legislation, and in particular the definition of trafficking, more into line with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized

Crime. She wondered whether bodies such as the specialized unit to combat human trafficking had adequate financial and human resources and whether their mandates reflected a gender perspective. According to alternative sources, the national referral mechanism had not yet been implemented, leaving officials without a procedure for identifying victims and referring them to the appropriate services. She would like to know what measures were being taken to enhance capacity-building and training for law enforcement and judicial authorities to enable them to identify trafficking victims and to investigate and try cases in a gender-sensitive manner. In the light of reports from alternative sources highlighting endemic corruption and even complicity in trafficking offences by State officials, it would be useful to know whether any such officials had been prosecuted.

47. The Committee was concerned about the fact that, although prostitution was not a criminal offence, women in prostitution could face administrative sanctions, including fines or administrative detention. Alternative sources had reported that cases of extortion by police officers had increased since 2015, when the penalties applicable to sex workers had been toughened. She would welcome information on plans to decriminalize prostitution and remove all administrative and other penalties. She invited the delegation to describe any efforts undertaken to suppress the demand for prostitution, including an update on the status of the bill that would penalize men who employed the services of sex workers. She enquired whether any assessment had been or would be conducted to determine the potential impact of such a law on the situation of women in prostitution. What action had been taken to provide alternative employment opportunities to women who wished to leave sex work?

48. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that, according to the data available to the delegation, between 2016 and 2018 a total of 140 persons had been prosecuted in 105 criminal cases related to human trafficking, in which over 70 per cent of the victims were women; the guilty parties had been convicted. Only administrative, and not criminal, sanctions were imposed in prostitution cases.

49. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the national development strategy for the period up to 2030 incorporated the international obligations of Tajikistan and covered a number of areas, including tackling the gender gap through improved policies to ensure equal opportunities; preventing all forms of violence against women and girls; developing institutional mechanisms to implement gender equality; and enhancing gender sensitivity among staff in all branches of government. All ministries and authorities were involved in pursuing the strategy, and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade was responsible for monitoring its implementation using a series of indicators.

50. Courses on domestic violence had been organized for staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They covered various topics to ensure that staff were equipped to tackle and prevent such violence. Measures were being taken to provide legal, medical and psychological assistance to domestic violence victims. Since the fact that most police officers were men deterred many women from reporting incidents of domestic violence, positions for 14 female domestic violence inspectors had been created as part of a project to encourage women victims to come forward. Special offices had been set up in maternity hospitals and other health-care centres to assist victims of domestic violence, most of whom were women and children. Complaints received were investigated by the police and special inspectors, and both criminal and administrative legal proceedings concerning domestic violence had been brought under the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Offences, respectively.

51. **Ms. Manalo** said that she would like to know how many women had been provided with State-funded legal aid in court cases involving domestic violence between 2014 and 2017. It would also be helpful to know how many victims had been awarded compensation by the courts for psychological and physical harm caused by domestic violence. Had any mechanism been developed by which to prosecute perpetrators of psychological and economic violence?

52. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that a broad legislative framework was in place to prevent human trafficking. Amendments to that framework were being drafted in

collaboration with the International Organization for Migration. A number of subsidiary laws to combat trafficking and assist victims were in the process of adoption. Under the national plan to combat human trafficking for the period 2016–2018, 34 support centres had been established, where victims were provided with social, psychological and material assistance. The law on prostitution was being reviewed and the Government would consider any recommendations resulting from that review.

53. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the Government had achieved a major reduction in poverty over the previous 15 years. The extreme poverty rate had also fallen significantly. A national strategy to combat poverty, which had been introduced in 2013, was aimed at reducing the poverty rate to 15 per cent by 2030 and eradicating extreme poverty by 2020. Low-income families, just over half of which were headed by women, received targeted social assistance amounting to 23 million somoni.

54. **Ms. Kosimzoda** (Tajikistan) said that a series of measures had been put forward under the national plan to combat human trafficking and to prevent prostitution, which constituted one of the root causes of trafficking in persons. Special institutions offered social, medical, legal and psychological support services, among other forms of assistance, to women in prostitution. The Government was working to raise migrants' awareness of their rights under the country's immigration laws. Some victims of human trafficking had been identified at airports and placed in rehabilitation centres, where they received social support, education and legal assistance. Trafficking victims who were not living in rehabilitation centres were provided with legal aid and psychological assistance.

55. **Ms. Jahan** said that it would be helpful to know how many of the 34 support centres were dedicated to female trafficking victims. She would appreciate clarification as to the number of support centres for trafficking victims, given that, according to alternative sources, the last shelter had closed when foreign funding had expired in 2016. She would be interested to hear whether legal aid for victims was conditional upon cooperation with law enforcement agencies in the prosecution process. Noting the stringent administrative sanctions in place for prostitution, she asked what safeguards were in place to ensure that sex trafficking victims did not face penalties for prostitution-related offences.

56. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that the 34 support centres continued to operate with local and national budget allocations. With financial assistance from the United States of America, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had set up a department to combat trafficking by identifying victims and collecting evidence.

57. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would like to know who would be responsible for implementing the components of the national development strategy that concerned violence against women and gender stereotypes.

58. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that all government ministries were involved in the implementation of the national development strategy. Each ministry was responsible for developing programmes in its specific area, in line with the priorities established under the strategy. All components of the strategy were funded by allocations from the national budget.

Articles 7 to 9

59. **Ms. Nadaraia** said the Committee was concerned to note that women's representation in political and public life remained very low in Tajikistan and that certain barriers, such as negative cultural attitudes and the absence of an adequate quota system, continued to hinder women's participation in political life. She wished to know whether the State party planned to introduce financial or other incentives to encourage the promotion of women to senior positions in political parties and to increase the visibility of women candidates during election campaigns. She wondered what measures had been or would be introduced to combat gender stereotypes in the media; monitor the use of disrespectful or stereotypical language in reference to women, particularly women politicians; and collect specific data on sexism in politics in order to enable the State party to better understand and address the problem. She asked whether any of the steps taken to increase women's involvement in the political sphere had had any impact on their representation in the

diplomatic service. Information on women's participation in the judiciary and in other areas of public life would also be welcome.

60. **Ms. Manalo** said that she was concerned about the number of stateless persons, persons with undetermined nationality and persons at risk of statelessness in Tajikistan, many of whom were women and children. She wished to know what measures were being taken to provide those persons with identity documents and ensure their access to basic services; what stage of consideration had been reached by the amnesty bill aimed at regularizing the status of stateless persons; and what impact the amendment of birth registration laws had had, especially on the stateless population. She would also appreciate information on action taken to ensure that stateless women and children were not subjected to deportation, discrimination or extortion by public officials.

61. **Ms. Kosimzoda** (Tajikistan), providing an overview of the various measures taken to attract women to the civil service and increase women's representation in leadership positions, which were outlined in paragraph 82 of her country's periodic report (CEDAW/C/TJK/6), said that the regulations governing the procedure for filling vacant administrative posts in the civil service now included certain accommodations for women candidates. In addition, a State programme for the education, selection and placement of talented girls and women in leadership positions had been launched, for the period 2017–2022, with the aim of eliminating gender inequality. The Sarvar State training centre also provided leadership courses for girls free of charge, and the Committee on Women and the Family awarded annual grants to talented women students in higher education.

62. **Mr. Sattorzoda** (Tajikistan) said that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a number of persons living in the jurisdiction of Tajikistan had failed to replace their documents with Tajik passports. An amnesty bill aimed at regularizing the status of stateless persons and foreign nationals unlawfully present in the territory of Tajikistan was currently under consideration.

63. Refugees and asylum seekers had the same rights to education, health and employment as citizens of Tajikistan. With the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which had an office in Tajikistan, a central database had been set up to streamline the process of registering refugees and asylum seekers.

64. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that the registration of births had almost doubled in the period between 2010 and 2017. According to the most recent population census, which had been conducted in 2010, there were some 1,300 stateless persons in Tajikistan. Regarding women in leadership, around 23 per cent of senior posts in the civil service were occupied by women. Moreover, women held high-level positions in regional and local councils, as well as in government ministries, departments and agencies. Overall, the proportion of women in senior and decision-making roles, in both the public and private sectors, was on the increase.

65. **Ms. Ameline** said it was important to ensure that measures aimed at the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment benefited all women and girls in all areas of life. Women should play an equal role not only in the political domain, but also in the fields of health, education and employment. She therefore urged the State party to accelerate legislative and other measures to foster women's equality and participation in every facet and at every level of public life.

66. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said it should be stressed that efforts to promote women's leadership and empowerment were at the heart of the Government's national strategy on promoting the role of women in Tajikistan.

67. **Ms. Manalo** said that she wished to know what proportion of women in the pool of candidates for promotion in the civil service had actually been appointed to senior positions in executive bodies.

68. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said that, while more needed to be done to increase women's representation in the parliament, the data provided in the periodic report demonstrated that women now occupied significantly more leadership positions in the

public sector than they had in 2012. Moreover, women were increasingly holding senior posts in the private sector or launching their own entrepreneurial activities.

69. **Mr. Rahmon** (Tajikistan) said that the pool of women candidates was always taken into account in the process of filling leadership positions. It should be noted that women already held high-level positions, including as heads of department, in various public institutions.

70. **The Chair**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that she wished to know how many citizens of the former Soviet Union had not been granted Tajik citizenship. Without the necessary identity documents, those persons were essentially rendered stateless.

71. **Mr. Alizoda** (Tajikistan) said that many ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek persons who lived in the Tajik border areas had, after the break-up of the Soviet Union, held onto their Soviet Union passports. However, that population group already had Tajik citizenship; the aim of the amnesty bill was simply to provide them with the proper documentation, which they currently lacked.

72. **Mr. Sattorzoda** (Tajikistan) said that those persons should have applied for Tajik passports in 1991, when Tajikistan had achieved independence. Nevertheless, once the bill on amnesty had been adopted and the necessary passports had been issued, the problem would be entirely resolved.

73. **Ms. Hasanzoda** (Tajikistan) said it was true that those persons could currently be considered to be stateless. However, of the 7.5 million persons who had completed the 2010 census questionnaire, only around 1,300 had self-identified as being stateless, and the number of stateless persons had decreased since then.

Articles 10 to 14

74. **Ms. Verges** said she noted that, while basic general education was compulsory in Tajikistan, girls' attendance rates were low, especially in rural areas, and girls' dropout rates in secondary and further education were high. She therefore wished to know what specific measures the State party was taking to enforce compulsory school attendance, particularly for girls; address the causes underlying the high dropout rate; and enable girls who had abandoned their studies to resume and complete their education. She wondered what was being done to encourage women and girls to choose fields of study in which women had traditionally been underrepresented, in particular science, technology, engineering and mathematics; address vertical and horizontal segregation in education, including the overrepresentation of women as preschool teachers; and eliminate gender stereotypes in school textbooks. She asked whether the quota for enrolment in higher education institutions was specifically for girls and whether sexual and reproductive health education was provided in schools. She invited the delegation to comment on reports that girls with HIV/AIDS were barred from studying medicine. Statistical data relating to school dropout and completion rates would also be appreciated.

75. **Ms. Haidar** said that the persistence of negative stereotypes prevented girls from pursuing non-traditional subjects and ultimately had the effect of reinforcing gender segregation in the labour market. For example, women workers were concentrated in sectors such as education and health care. She called on the Government to reconsider its current position and repeal article 216 of the Labour Code, which prohibited the employment of women in physically demanding, underground or hazardous occupations. Women should be able to decide for themselves whether or not they wished to work in such occupations.

76. She wondered whether the delegation could explain the reasons for the alarming decrease in the proportion of women in the labour market, which had fallen sharply between 2013 and 2016. There was an acute shortage of preschool and childcare facilities, especially in rural areas, and that represented a serious impediment to women's employment. She noted with concern that many women worked in the informal sector or performed unpaid care work. She asked how the State party ensured that women working in the informal economy had access to social security entitlements; what measures were envisaged to reduce the gender pay gap, especially in sectors traditionally occupied by women; what steps were being taken to upskill disadvantaged groups of women, such as

women with disabilities, women with multiple children and women heads of household; and how the State party encouraged employers to hire women from vulnerable groups. She would also like to know what action was being taken to protect the rights of women migrant workers.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.